

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A silicon nitride sintered material containing a silicon nitride component and silicon carbide having an average particle size of 1 μm or less in an amount of at least 1 mass% and less than 4 mass%, based on 100 mass% of the silicon nitride component. The carbide is dispersed in the silicon nitride component, and the silicon nitride sintered material has a thermal expansion coefficient of at least 3.7 ppm/ $^{\circ}\text{C}$ between room temperature and 1,000 $^{\circ}\text{C}$. The silicon nitride component contains a rare earth element in an amount of 15-25 mass% as reduced to a certain oxide thereof and Cr in an amount of 5-10 mass% as reduced to a certain oxide thereof, and a crystalline phase is present in intergrain regions of the sintered material.